

# Contemporary Stone & Tile Design

## Revamping Living Spaces

JK Roller Architects and Gary Ruff Interiors collaborated on the design of the Canno residence, a 3,500 square foot penthouse suite at Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. According to Matt Koenig, a principal at JK Roller, "The goal was to take an apartment that had six bedrooms and five and a half bathrooms and create large open spaces, reducing the unit to three bedrooms and three and a half baths. The apartment was beautiful to begin with, but it was very outdated, and the living spaces were kind of confusing. We wanted to flip them so that the private rooms were in the back of the unit and the living areas were the rooms facing the nice views of the Philly skyline." The design moved the master bedroom suite to the western side of the unit and the living room to the eastern side. "The new layout successfully connects the living spaces with the spectacular views on both sides of the buildings," stated the design team.



After the unit was gutted and rebuilt, the architects began consulting with their client about materials that would be used. "The owner wanted to use a stone he had never seen before," said Koenig. "We looked in a lot of places to find a very unusual stone." California Giallo granite was ultimately selected for the backsplashes in the living room and family room, as well as for most of the windowsills and countertops, and the back splash for the built-in bar area. Koenig describes the granite as resembling tiger fur, having black and orange stripes with tan specks. "We wanted to create areas of interest," said the architects. "There aren't a lot of art features in the living room; the stone is the artwork of the unit."

Granite was also chosen to decorate the master bathroom, with the jacuzzi tub clad in 12 x 12 inch pieces of Black Galaxy. A 1 1/4 inch thick slab of the same stone was used for the vanity. The shower floor, which features underfloor heating, is comprised of stainless steel, while the walls are decorated in 4 x 4 inch glass tiles. According to Koenig, the glass tiles accent the black stone very well.

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Additionally, the architects carried the Black Galaxy into the kitchen, where they also used 1 1/4 inch thick slabs for the countertops. "The owner definitely loves the place," said Koenig. "He was heavily involved with the selection of materials. He even went with us to the warehouses to choose the stone, and he is extremely happy with the color choices." All of the stone was supplied by Valley Marble and Granite and installed by Miller Robinson Construction - both of which are located in Huntingdon Valley, PA.

Koenig believes that people equate granite and marble materials with sophistication. "Whether used in a slab form for a kitchen countertop or as a tile on a lobby or bathroom floor, the materials add a sense of richness to any project," he said. "More and more people are using stone for countertops in kitchens, bathrooms and bar areas than other materials such as solid surfaces like Corian. The costs are equivalent, and the real stone adds warmth and texture. Also with the growth of home centers like Lowes and Home Depot, basic stones are readily available."



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## A Sense of Luxury

For the design of a 4,500 square foot private residence in Rittenhouse Square in Center City, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, JK Roller Architects incorporated the use of marble and granite to fulfill the homeowner's request to add a sense of luxury to the apartment. "The owner recommended the use of porcelain tile, but we suggested marble and granite instead." said Matt Koenig, AIA, a principal of the Philadelphia based firm, which worked in collaboration with Gary Ruff Interiors of Moorestown, NJ. "He relied on us for direction for developing the specific style of old traditional Philadelphia architecture. He was looking for sensible colors in a nice soft palette. We showed him samples, and he fell in love with the colors green and tan."

U.S. Stone Co. of East Norriton, PA, supplied nearly 500 square feet of granite countertops and 2,500 square feet of stone tile, including Black Absolute granite, White Mist granite, Crema Marfil marble and Jade Green marble for the project, and they were used in varying applications throughout the residence.



Chinese Jade Green marble and Crema Marfil were selected for the 18 foot long master bathroom of the private residence. The shower floor is comprised of 1 x 1 inch tiles of jumbled Jade green marble in a mosaic pattern, while 12 x 12 inch pieces were selected for the wall and ceiling. The floor of the master bath features 12 x 12 inch Crema Marfil tiles accented by diamond shaped accent pieces of Black absolute granite. Moreover, Jade Green marble forms the jacuzzi tub surround and the two steps leading up to it. A thin ribbon strip of the marble also runs around the Crema Marfil marble wainscot.

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The use of stone continues into the hallway, with Black Absolute granite pieces accented by Crema Marfil marble creating an alternating pattern on the walls. In the entry foyer, Black Absolute granite tiles are complemented by an interior square border of Crema Marfil. Marble is also used to decorate the windowsills in the master bedroom, while granite is used on the windowsills in the living room. The kitchen countertops are fabricated from White Mist granite, which has burgandy flecks.

Another key feature in the apartment is a 3 1/2 x 7 foot Paradiso granite customized waterfall. "The owner wanted to use a granite with interest, so we went on a number of trips to factoroes to find something with a unique pattern," said Koenig. "The owner was inspired by a waterfall he saw on a trip to Martha's Vineyard. We designed the waterfall as a thin film of water running down a stone. It serves as a piece of artwork and creates a nice termination to the end of the dining room table."



According to Koenig, the owner is extremely happy with the finished result, especially the use of marble in the bathroom. "I was recently at the house, and the stone has aged extremely well," he said. "We selected the appropriate choice of materials and timeless colors that won't go out of style. It's a showplace; the owner entertains a lot."

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